

Media, PA – The message was clear from educators and businesspeople throughout the Seventh Congressional District: opportunities exist for young people to excel in high-value manufacturing fields and obtain quality jobs, but they need to receive appropriate training during and after their secondary school years. After hosting a Workforce Development Summit and convening meetings of his Higher Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) brought together representatives of secondary schools, institutions of higher education, and local businesses for a new initiative that will emphasize artisan-skill training. — “A critical facet of a healthy economy is a strong, versatile workforce that is prepared for careers in this era of extraordinary technological advancements,” said Congressman Sestak. “One area where many quality jobs exist is in manufacturing fields, such as welding, which require more advanced artisan skills and a greater proficiency in math than they used to. Many local business leaders have told me that they cannot find enough qualified employees for these careers. This initiative will partner businesses with school districts to introduce students to high-value manufacturing fields and establish a relationship between the businesses and the community. I am looking forward to our next meeting and starting to work out some of the details of these partnerships.”

This initiative has grown out of the Congressman’s numerous efforts in workforce development, a vital part of his work to enhance the economy in the region. At his summit in June, he brought them together the administrators of vocational and technical schools, as well as those schools that have vo-tech curriculum, and businesses in the region. The event was composed of three panels, focusing on the needs of local businesses, programs available at local technical and vocational schools and the process of matching recent graduates to local businesses.

In his latest advisory committee meeting, members reviewed the themes of his summit, discussing how to better prepare students to meet the needs of local businesses and ways to address the lack of participation in training programs for artisan skills. Building on one of the main topics of his Summit, the Congressman used the meeting to discuss methods of partnering local high schools with area businesses and introducing students to careers in high-value manufacturing fields, which are struggling to find qualified employees. These discussions lead directly to his new initiative.

In addition, Congressman Sestak presented a \$187,000 check to the Delaware County Chamber Foundation last week for a job readiness program that will be geared toward providing more technical training opportunities. The Congressman advocated for and won the funding through the federal appropriations process.

To continue his effort to prepare constituents for the workforce, the Congressman is hosting a Job Readiness Conference on August 19 at Upper Darby High School at 6PM. This event will feature a general audience/panel discussion with area business leaders and human resources professionals, followed by small break-out sessions with experts leading workshops on topics such as interviewing, resumes, and networking.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.